THE GOOD MISER OF ASBURY PARK

"Kerosene John," the Strangest of Hermits, Who Lives in a Hut in the Woods, and Saves That He May Give to the Poor.

miser, who for forty years has toiled
t and day, and squeezed and ground to
ng the last penny from a world in
ch he is a pariah, an outcast and a
of ridicule.
burly, bow-backed, wizened old her-
living in a hut far from the sound of
ilization, sorting and saving there the
of old clothes and rubbish gathered
the streets of the town. A companion of
s, the master of a threshold which no
man foot save his own ever crosses. A
exact and typical miser.
hat is the way the world sees him. But
er that sordid cloak he has hidden for
irly half a century such deeds of char-
as rich men may blush to hear of.
ed and maligned by man, mocked at
he village streets, he has suffered and
it dwindles suddenly to a mere wood path, and turns abruptly into the thickest of the bush. A mile or so further on it ends abruptly, and you are out of civilization altogether. It might be a patch of the Great American Desert for all the evidence there is of the previous presence of mankind.

But this is the way that "Kerosene John" has journeyed to and fro every day ever since the soldiers came home to the States from the war in Mexico. A wagon was a mere encumbrance in this tangle, and had to be abandoned. After an hour's search along all the open spaces a fierce barking of many dogs told that the habitat of the hermit was near by. Without their warning the search might have gone on for hours, for the old man's home, though it stood less than fifty feet away in the bush, was utterly concealed from view, and no pathway pointed to its door.

Stranger dwelling hermit never had. The hut itself, only about fifteen feet high, is framed of heavy, hand-hewn timbers, and made up of an incredible hodge-podge of rough clapboards, covers of soap boxes, scraps of tin and whatsoever else may serve to keep out wind and weather. It is windowless as a coffin, and its one door is fastened with a burly padlock.

The idea of shutting himself off from the rest of the world is a dominant one in the old man's mind, for even in this solitude he has fenced in his homestead with an anomalous structure, about four feet high, built of odds and ends of boards, scantling, fagots, barrel staves and what not, all woven together tightly with rusty wire. The courtyard, or patio, thus set apart is divided into five enclosures, and the connecting gates to all of these are heavily chained and padlocked. The obstacle they offer is more moral than material, for a healthy school boy could clear them at a bound.

"Kerosene John" has no horse, but in his twisted old intelligence there must be some plutocratic notion of possessing a stable, for in one section of the "court" long pegs protrude from the shabby fence, and from them were hanging thirty or forty variegated straps and broken bits of harness. In the adjoining space were numberless wheels from small wagons; bolts, bars, axles, whiffletrees and broken whips. Two other sections are roughly roofed with worn-out tin roofing, and serve as storehouses. Here was a garnered wealth of old hats, shoes, coats, pieces of bedding, carpets; everything piled carefully, according to its kind. Hanging in a row from nails driven in the timbers overhead were a dozen or more tin coffee pots and pails of various sizes.

Down near the turn into the main road John Towner paused from his work in a marl-pit, and leaned upon his spade. He is a gray, old man, and for he does not remember how many years has been the hermit's nearest neighbor. His humble home is more than half a mile away, but that is close enough neighboring for people in the New Jersey pine woods.

"Know 'Kerosene John?'" he said. "Should say I did. Some of the pines' farmers down further south 'n this die without knowin' so much as the name of the man that lines 'em on either side. But the people out here all know John. It makes me laugh sometimes to hear the crazy stories folks to Asbury Park tells about him. I guess they must dream 'em and then tell 'em so often that bimeby they get to b'lieve 'em theirselves. There' aint any mystery about John; not after you git outside of Asbury Park.

"His name is John Covert. He come of a good fam'ly, John did—farmers, an' decent folks, every way. People's done a lot of guessin' and story tellin' about the way John come by his crookedness. I'll tell you how it was:

"When he was a young lad he was just as straight, husky, lively a man as you be—barin' your presence—though, o' course, he wa'n't so big nor quite so dressed up. Well, one Sunday night a party of boys was comin' home from meetin', and they got to foolin' like boys will, an' one of 'em hit John in the back o' the neck. It was all in fun, but it doubled John up like a jack-knife, an' he stayed so. He walked crooked after that, an' then they took to callin' him nick-names. They never thought he'd take it to heart, but he did. He felt awful bad; so bad that, to get clear of it, he went off by himself an' took to livin' in the woods, instead of killin' himself as some would. But he couldn't live on brushwood, so he begun to go to the village. The good-hearted folks there took pity on him and give him their stale bread. He'd come back and trade the bread for eggs, an' then trade the eggs for currosene. Then he'd peddle the currosene through the country. That's the way he got the name of 'Currosene John.'

"He worked so hard and walked so far to make a few pennies that folks began to call him a miser, but by Gosh if he's a miser I'd like to see a bigger pop'lation o' misers 'round this part of the country. Miser! Why, that old fellow gives about nine-tenths of the money he makes to poor people that's got more children 'n they can find bread for. That's what he does with it.

"Now there's his sister, that lives about three miles over on the other side. He takes bread an' things over there every day or so. She's got children enough an' plenty—ten or 'leven, I do' know which. I guess they'd have been hungry more 'n once if it hadn't been for his bein' the partic'lar kind of miser that he is. There's lots of others livin' along the road that's e't his bread at different times, an' there aint a house in these parts that hasn't got open doors an' a welcome for him whenever he feels like walkin' in an' settin' down. He looks after 'em all, provides for 'em when they need it, does their errands for 'em an' won't never take a cent for anything from anybody that's poor. Nobody, exceptin' it is his Maker, has kep' anything like an ac'rate count of the good that pore afflicted ole man has done.

"His heart is a good sight bigger 'n his house. Ef he had the Vanderbilt millions he'd die pore. He'll doctor a sick animal ex if it was a human baby. Now, them dogs that people says he keeps there to protect his money. Nonsense! I know all about 'em. Them's stray dogs that he's found wanderin' 'round the streets of Asb'ry Park, with their bones stickin' out through their skin fer starvation. Whenever he finds a homeless, hungry dog he fetches it out here an' feeds it up so's its fit for a county fair. He brings home bones an' scraps of meat for 'em. That's the kind of a mean man John is.

"Religion? No, he aint got no special kind of religion. It's just the big, tender heart he's got that makes him want to help everything an' everybody that's down on their luck. He was brought up a Methodis' and I guess he aint forgot the teachin's of it yet, for all some folks think he aint got the proper kind of church frills. They say he acts queer, but he aint so queer as some of them are when it comes to stakin' a hungry man to somethin' to eat. He's done his duty by his fellow bein's, and more, too, and that's the most you can say of any man livin'—more'n you can say of most folks.

"Money hid in that house of his'n? That's the fool story that people in Asb'ry Park tells you. No. You take my word for it. I know him and the things he does an' how he lives, an' if John Covert has laid up anythin' you can bet it's up yonder, where moth an' rust don't c'rupt, and he don't need no dogs to keep the thieves f'm gittin it."

With this devout, scathing, heartfelt and impressive utterance John Towner resumed his digging in the marl-pit.

Pegging along the main road, only a little way from the entrance to the brush, came "Kerosene John," moving slowly, his pack poised on his stooped shoulders. A fierce, forbidding figure he is—the last human shape one would think of as being the encasement of so much philanthropy. From the waist upward, or rather from the waist outward, he is bent at an almost impossible angle; his deformity is pitiful. Twisting himself to one side and tilting back until

"KEROSENE JOHN" COMES HOME TO HIS HUT IN THE WOODS AND IS GREETED BY HIS DOGS.

still, and gone on doing good. And
the first that ever has been known
bounty, save by the poor to whom
ve it.
is an age of vast fortunes and vast
g, but charity records tell no story
his.
John O! Kerosene John!"
't is an old, familiar cry in the streets of
bury Park, and the outlying huddles of
ses which pass for villages in the his-
county of Monmouth. Generations of
ains have shouted it, to herald the
ngest figure that is known along the
ey coast.
ere comes the miser! Hear his money
le! Gimme a hundred thousand dollars,
d Lampblack! Lampblack! Kerosene
"
in and day out, in all sorts of
er, "Kerosene John" has hobbled
the lonely roads which thread the
levels. Farmers, early abroad, over-
ke him long before daybreak, trudging
nto town, and the last lolterer on the
ays through the scrub oaks descries his
gnarled and twisted figure, laboring along
homeward in the darkness, under a burden
almost as big as itself. When the roads
are smooth he trundles a rude mockery of
a wagon which he has pieced together out
of odds and ends.

For forty years and more he has lived there in the loneliness and desolation of the pine woods, coming, going, gathering, hoarding, they say; and now the townsfolk will tell you that bags of yellow gold and bundles of bank notes are hidden in the walls and flooring of his cabin, and buried in the little clearing which he calls his dooryard. On Winter nights, when gales are raving along the coast and snow is covering the roads through the forests, people snuggle by their fireside and tell how "Kerosene John" sits alone in his hut on such nights, when no one can come near him, and counts the riches of his coin.

No matter how wild the storm, nor how deeply blocked the roadways leading into town, the first footprints in the snow of Asbury Park in the morning are familiar ones of "Kerosene John." He is as punctually as the sunrise, and no day dawns which does not bring the person with it the word will travel through all of the gossiping town in a trice. They will proclaim that at last the miser is lying dead in the midst of his wealth in the lonely hut across the waste. The road, which rambles along in indecisive fashion, is wretched enough at best, but at the foot of the sand ridges, as beyond all need of further pretensions,

A HISTORY OF WHISKERS.

Here's Everything in the Line of Beards, from Adam Almost to Mr. Peffer.

"Man, vain man," has with his whiskers played such fantastic tricks that angels must have wept but to behold them, and true tonsorial artists from their presence tremblingly retire.

"The wind blew through his whiskers" was not written alone of the ex-Senator from Kansas.

"The little bunch of spinach 'neath his chin" may conjure up visions of the gentleman from the wilds of New Jersey.

Yet, as a matter of fact, neither the Populist nor the gentleman from the suburbs of Hackensack has given to the world anything new in the line of hirsute facial adornment.

Every possible combination of the male beard with a face as a background has been played. There have been bewhiskered cycles. The changes have been rung from the matted whiskers of Thor to the clean shave of a Pope, and back again from the trailing beard of the father of the Sutherland sisters to the gimlet-like chin decoration of Cardinal Richelieu, as he is seen in pictures.

Santa Claus always has full flowing whiskers. Mephistopheles is painted with a small black mustache and a chin decoration that is called an imperial.

The world has grown to accept certain types of whiskers. On the stage the villain wears mustaches with waxed ends. The relentless "bailiff" must make up with little "side chops" or the manager will get some one that will. Never was there a smooth-faced pirate. No man could hold the rank of Major without a heavy mustache. The man of business must have what were once called "Burnside" whiskers, the General of that name wearing a luxuriant crop parted at the chin. Out West they call "Burnsides" "sideburns" and in some places "sideboards." In ancient days men swore by their beards. Whiskers were the insignia of the warrior. A smooth chin denoted the courtier. Sometimes men were slaves to fashion, and wore their beards after the style of the monarch then reigning.

With great delicacy, none of the gentlemen who attended the court of Catherine of Russia presumed to appear in the imperial presence with more than a mere suggestion of a one-day hairy growth on the upper lip.

The cavalier wore his hair long, and a gracefully drooping mustache and pointed whisker made the picture complete. Cromwell's sturdy adherents had their hair and beard closely cropped in defiance, and were called "roundheads."

English literature has preserved the manners and the costumes of the people ever since the days of printing, and an interesting book has just found its way into the libraries that reproduces the whiskered history of the tight little isle.

A contemplation of the remarkable cut of the "pointers" of Henry IV. will show their resemblance to the ancient lyre. It was the court jester who conceived the idea of the wind playing upon the whiskers.

The "ripple beard" of the vintage of 1553 is rarely seen in these days. It was not worn by a Circassian, but by John Bale, a theologian, whose writings have not survived him.

John Knox, who lived in Clifford's day, ran to whiskers of a length popularly called to-day "deacon's whiskers."

In the days of Elizabeth Sir Walter Raleigh, Robert, Earl of Essex, and others of the royal court wore their whiskers much in the style of Richard Croker, of New York City and England.

Piety has ever run to whiskers, and the "theologian's beard of 1605" depicted is that of Theodore Beya. John Fox, quaintly described as a "martyrologist," died in 1587 with his luxuriant whiskers divided at the chin.

The so-called Titian whiskers, also used by Correggio in the depiction of saints and holy men, were best developed on F. Morus, a theologian who went to his reward in 1592.

Peter Martyr, a reformer, who died in 1562, had a style of beard that is hard to imitate, and could only be maintained by a man with a heavy hirsute growth, in the frequent hands of an expert barber.

The cheek whiskers of 1645, a hideous style, was given to Europe by Candes, the Prime Minister of Philip IV. The style died with Candes, and has never been revived except by comic opera comedians.

John Calvin wore the spiral beard of 1564. He did the best he could in the whisker line. The twin whiskers of 1654 are reproduced as the regulation chin dressing of the King's arquebusiers of that day.

John Taylor, "the water poet," amused his friends with the old corkscrew beard, that is frequently imitated to-day in France and Italy.

The "swallowtail beard" was another hairy freak of a theologian. Jerome Weller, who died in 1572, and Erasmus Schmidt, a Greek scholar, failed in 1637 to popularize the triangle beard. The bushy whiskers of Captain John Smith might have been worn later by Harry Morgan, Captain Kidd or any old shiver-my-timbers buccaneer.

The "Hocus Pocus" beard gets its name from Hocus Pocus, Jr., the author of the Anatomie of Legerdemaine. All magicians affect this cut, as they imagine it helps them to look quite devilish.

The square beard of 1596 is another growth on a theologian's chin—J. Kimedantius.

The rabbit's tail of 1650, the shoemakers' beard of 1575, seen in portraits of Duke Sully and Hans Sachs, the poet; the Italian fashion of 1648; the "T" beard that prevailed at the French and German courts in 1649; the stiletto beard, which is suggested by a portrait of Charles IV., King of Denmark; the double tuft of Cardinal Borromeoi in 1631, and the remarkable curled mustaches and pointed chin beard that always figure in pictures of the great Gustavus Adolphus, are a few of the distinctive styles in beards that find imitators in this day.

BISMARCK'S HEALTH.

He Tells a Visitor Why the Nerves of His Face Have Broken Down.

The Schlesische Zeitung publishes a long account of the chat of a Silesian neighbor with Prince Bismarck, whom he seems to have found in a very communicative mood.

The octogenarian statesman was plied with all manner of questions, personal and political. He describes himself as "a bankrupt in nerves." The neuralgic pain in his jaws often makes it difficult for him to open his mouth. "That is a natural and reasonable judgment," said he, "for all through my life my chief sins have been those of my mouth—eating, drinking and making speeches."

When his interviewer ventured to draw him out upon the vexed question of the proper regal epithet for the old Kaiser Wilhelm, he paused for some time, and then said, with evident emotion, "the Great? No, that does not exactly fit him. But he was a true knight; he was a hero."

WANT A ROYAL WIDOW?

The Late Shah's Harem Has Been Dispersed and His Widows May Marry.

It is announced that the harem of the late Shah of Persia has been dispersed. He had an extremely fine collection of wives and lodged them sumptuously. His successor did not care to support this part of his father's belongings, especially as he had a similar institution of his own to look after. Only a few women, having strong family influence, were allowed to retain lodgings in the royal palaces.

The others are free to marry, but they have been warned that they must not do this with Persian civil or military officials. If any one with a passion for curiosities would like to acquire a royal widow he has now an excellent opportunity to do so. The American Consul at Teheran will no doubt receive many inquiries.

A TERRIBLE ECZEMA

Her Face Covered with Scales. Could Not Leave Home. Had to Sacrifice Hair.

Tried CUTICURA REMEDIES. Improvement In Three Weeks. Six Weeks Complete Cure.

Four years ago Eczema made its appearance on my head in its worst form. I was attended by two physicians, but notwithstanding their treatment it continued spreading, until my face was covered with scales and became a horrid, loathsome sight. For three months I did not leave the house. I had a fine head of hair, seven years' growth, and had to sacrifice it. I was in despair. The physicians had failed even to relieve me, when one of them recommended CUTICURA SOAP. I used three boxes of CUTICURA (ointment), one half dozen cakes of CUTICURA SOAP, and one bottle of CUTICURA RESOLVENT, and in three weeks from the time I began, the scales had left my face and the skin lost its florid hue. *In six weeks I was entirely cured.* My face was smooth and my complexion clearer than it had ever been before. MARION A. SMITH, Sunbury, Pa.

SPEEDY CURE TREATMENT.—Warm baths, with CUTICURA SOAP, gentle applications of CUTICURA (ointment), the great skin cure, and mild doses of CUTICURA RESOLVENT, greatest of blood purifiers and humor cures.

Sold throughout the world. POTTER D. & C. CORP., Sole Props., Boston. "How to Cure the Worst Eczema," free.

BABY'S SKIN Scalp and Hair Purified and Beautified by CUTICURA SOAP.

AT ONCE Collins' Voltaic Electric Plasters relieve weak backs, painful kidneys, uterine pains, sore lungs, muscular pains, and rheumatism.

SCIENCE SCORES OVER PREJUDICE

Wall of Scepticism Gives Way at Last.

VITAL MAGNETISM TRIUMPHS

Indorsed by Physicians Who at First Refused to Recognize Its Powers.

Every theory that science advances runs against a stone wall of scepticism, and particularly is the wall built up and strengthened by those who are in some way hurt by the advanced theory.

Take, for instance, the theory, or, more properly speaking, the principle of Vital Magnetism. When Professor S. J. Damon first began his great work in New York about six months ago, and before thousands of people cured the sick and suffering, the halt and the blind at Masonic Temple, he publicly offered to take into his confidence any physician who would come forward and to teach him the principle of Vital Magnetism; offered to give to the medical profession the result of a lifetime of scientific research; offered to show how his great work was accomplished, and to put the method within the reach of all who would come forward and receive his teachings.

Professor S. J. Damon.

Did any doctor accept the offer?

Not one.

They not only refused in any way to take advantage of the opportunity, but discouraged any of their patients who suggested securing the help offered by the great healers. In this way they attempted to build up and strengthen a wall of scepticism, but it did not last; it could not last. Every day their patients were losing faith in the time-worn theories; every day they were witnessing the marvellous work of Professor Damon and his associates at Masonic Temple, where, without the aid of one drop of medicine, wonderful cures were being made.

Gradually the feeling of unbelief began to disappear; gradually the wall of scepticism began to crumble at its base, until within the last month the mighty wave of approval of Vital Magnetism which has swept over the city has demolished the wall so completely that barely a stone remains to tell the tale.

Within the last month a series of letters from physicians has appeared in the leading papers of the city and vicinity, heartily indorsing the life-giving principles of Vital Magnetism; going further and proving beyond any doubt every claim made by Professor Damon for his work, and all this given without solicitation by the very people who, six months ago, were so ready to raise the cry against the very principle they are so earnestly advocating now.

Vital Magnetism is the greatest healing principle of the age. It works on lines scientifically correct, and yet, to the mind of the most conservative, simplicity personified.

The human body, with its wonderful system of nerve lines, is like an intricate network of wires. Vital Magnetism, and Vital Magnetism alone, can reach these lines, and, arresting any disturbance, restore the normal condition. As well expect a bottle of medicine to mend a broken electric wire as to expect a dose of drugs to correct a nerve disturbance in the human system. Electricity as a principle of life is only beginning its existence. Every day new principles are developed, and Vital Magnetism is, in simple words, human electricity. The absence in the system of a requisite amount of magnetism means sickness, and the transference of the lacking amount from a body strongly charged with electricity means every time a complete restoration to health.

Volumes have been written of the wonderful cures made by Professor Damon and his associates at the Damon Institute and Sanitarium, 30 and 32 West Twenty-seventh street, telling how people suffering from deafness, blindness, goitre, consumption, rheumatism, palsy, paralysis, liver and kidney troubles, heart affections, brain disorders; in fact, from all the ailments in the category, are cured, and through the medium of Vital Magnetism sent away happy and rejoicing.

A modest fee of one dollar is all Professor Damon charges for consultation and examination, and if he find he cannot for any reason effect a cure he will not for any sum undertake the case.

There is no denying the amount of good these great healers have accomplished in this city in the last six months, and all over the world in the last quarter of a century, and it is no cause for wonder that men and women from miles around are flocking to the Damon Institute to seek the help they are so sure of securing.

The Damon Sanitarium forms an excellent place for patients from out of town to live in while in the city, and secures for them the added advantage of the constant attention of the famous disciples of Vital Magnetism, and for those who live in New York or vicinity dozens of lines of transportation afford ready means of reaching the Institutions.

If you are sick or suffering, or if you know any one who is, don't neglect this opportunity, for the great healers, headed by Professor Damon, are proving a boon to suffering humanity, and calling down on their heads the heartfelt thanks of a grateful multitude.